

## **Playwriting continues to take centre stage at STC**

- **Sue Smith is the new STC Patrick White Playwrights' Fellow**
- **Kim Ho wins the Patrick White Playwrights' Award**

Sue Smith is the new STC Patrick White Playwrights' Fellow, it was announced tonight, 21 May 2018, at a special event at Sydney Theatre Company (STC). It was also announced that this year's Patrick White Playwrights' Award recipient is Kim Ho for his play *Mirror's Edge*, which was presented as a rehearsed reading to a sell-out audience at the Richard Wherrett Studio at the Roslyn Packer Theatre.

### **The Fellow**

Smith is well known to STC audiences for her play *Kryptonite* in 2014 which was nominated for Best Play at the 2014 Sydney Theatre Awards, as well as *Machu Picchu* in 2016 which starred Lisa McCune and Darren Gilshenan.

Now in its seventh year, the \$25,000 Fellowship is awarded annually to an established playwright in recognition of their excellent body of work and achievements. As well as including a commission from STC, which each Fellow develops during their year-long engagement, the tenure provides opportunities for the playwright to share their skills with other playwrights and artists including the STC Emerging Writer's Group. Previous STC Patrick White Fellows are Andrew Bovell, Tommy Murphy, Kate Mulvany, Angela Betzien, Hilary Bell, Patricia Cornelius and Raimondo Cortese.

Sue Smith said: "I am absolutely rapt to be selected as the STC's 2018 Patrick White Fellow. This is an incredible privilege and an opportunity for which I'm very very grateful. All aspects of this Fellowship represent wonderful learning opportunities. Firstly, to have access to the inner workings of a large and forward looking theatre company is a dream come true to a playwright. This is a chance to be part of the company, to learn how it works, how it thinks, how it makes its choices, how it decides exactly what will speak to its audience, and how it will frame that conversation. And, on a micro level, it's a chance to watch rehearsals and company runs and to see the nuts and bolts of how successful plays are pieced together. All of which will make a better writer. Secondly, of course, there's the commission and a chance to develop a new work alongside some of the best theatre minds in the country – the chance to tap them on the shoulder regularly and say 'hey, what do you think about this?' A chance any playwright would kill for. And, perhaps most importantly, there's the opportunity to work with the company's four emerging playwrights – bright talented thoughtful young people who represent the theatrical voices of the future. I understand that my role with them is mentorship, but I'm in absolutely no doubt that they will teach me a great deal more than I'm likely to teach them! So thank you, STC. I can't wait to start!"

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### **The Award winner**

126 scripts were submitted anonymously for the 2017 Patrick White Playwrights' Award, with the prize of \$7500 for an original, unproduced script presented to Kim Ho for *Mirror's Edge*.

The judges applauded the ambition and inventiveness of the play. Spanning three time lines between 1851 and the present, the play has broad reach but is neatly contained in a single location: Lake Tyrell in Victoria, a destination that in recent years has attracted a massive influx of Chinese tourists. The characters who populate the play are richly and sympathetically drawn. They interact with each other in surprising ways, unfettered by temporal confines. Each character is distinct in experience and world view; yet each is searching for some peace here and within themselves. The use of liquid time and a series of potentially beautiful motif images give the play a powerful sense of theatricality. *Mirror's Edge* allows us to glimpse our past and hints at what our future might be.

*Mirror's Edge* received a rehearsed reading directed by STC's Directing Associate, Jessica Arthur, and performed by Mathew Cooper, Phoebe Grainer, Eliza Logan, Ivy Mak, Michelle Ny, Ella Prince, Justin Smith and Courtney Stewart.

### **The Emerging Writers' Group**

It was also announced this evening that the STC's Emerging Writers' Group participants would continue in the group for another year. Now in its second year, the Emerging Writer's Group aims to encourage the next generation of Australian playwrights, supporting their professional development, expanding skill sets and helping them discover and hone their own distinctive voices.

Emme Hoy, Julian Larnach, Moreblessing Maturure and Disapol Savetsila will continue to meet regularly throughout the year-long program and will be mentored by STC's Artistic Director, Literary Manager, Patrick White Playwrights' Fellow and resident directors. They also attend STC productions, company runs and take part in workshops with STC artists, as well as have opportunities to discuss work they see and their own artistic practice. All participants also have the opportunity to develop a commission pitch for STC programming consideration.

**##ENDS##**

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## **Short biographies**

### **Sue Smith**

Sue Smith is a multi-award winning screenwriter, playwright and script editor.

Her first stage play Thrall, was produced by Tamarama Rock Surfers in 2006 and her professional theatre debut, Strange Attractor, premiered at Griffin Theatre in 2009. Sue also wrote the libretto for Rembrandt's Wife, which premiered at the Victorian Opera. Her adaptation of Tolstoy's The Kreutzer Sonata premiered at the State Theatre Company of South Australia to rave reviews. Her play Kryptonite was produced by Sydney Theatre Company and State Theatre Company of South Australia in 2014 and was nominated for Best Play at the 2014 Sydney Theatre Awards. Her play, Machu Picchu, starred Lisa McCune in the 2016 program for the Sydney Theatre Company and State Theatre Company of South Australia, and her newest play Hydra is under commission with Queensland Theatre.

Sue's screen credits include co-writer of *Saving Mr Banks*; *MABO*; *Bastard Boys*; *Peaches*; *RAN*; *Temptation*; *The Road from Coorain*; *Bordertown*; *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Brides of Christ*.

### **Kim Ho**

Kim Ho is a Melbourne-based writer, performer and dramaturg. His short film *The Language of Love*, produced by Australian Theatre for Young People, screened at over thirty film festivals worldwide, including the Sundance Film Festival. Kim was the 2013 recipient of the Besen Family Artist Programme, Writer's Development at Malthouse Theatre, and in 2016 he co-coordinated the company's Provocateur programme. In 2017, an excerpt of his play *Mirror's Edge* received a staged reading in Cybec Electric at Melbourne Theatre Company as part of AsiaTOPA. Later that year Kim co-devised and performed in the inaugural La Mama Youth Ensemble show *Kiss Sigh Shout Laugh Cry Dream*. A passionate advocate of empowering marginalised voices through art, he aims to make and support culturally diverse Australian writing. Kim is currently undertaking a Masters of Writing for Performance at the Victorian College of Arts.